

653 a council responsibility. While the rebuilding of the arterial road
[491] from Popondetta and Kokoda was an expensive (and seemingly interminable) responsibility of the government, the side roads became the council's responsibility. Similarly, the government built the major hospitals while the council looked after the village aid posts.

652 The council's revenue mainly came from taxes--a head tax of
\$8 for men and \$1 for women. This is the only personal tax directly
levied among Orokaiva village people and has replaced the government
[687] head tax. Its collection was not a government but a council responsibility, although defaulters could, of course, be brought before a magistrate and sentenced to a term in a government jail. Councillors explained to the villagers that the taxes they paid went to pay for their roads, aid posts, water supplies, etc. The government hoped that villagers would be more ready to pay their taxes if they could see tangible local benefits to justify them. One effect of the system was that villagers became very interested to see that as much as possible of the tax money should be spent in their own locality. They rapidly developed a strong propensity for parish-pump politics. When I visited Sasembata district first, there was little evidence of any council projects in the Sasembata wards. People objected to paying
[667] their taxes: they were not getting anything for them. Pressure resulted in roading improvements and plans for a comprehensive water supply for the area. Councillors who did not fight successfully for such causes were liable to miss re-election.

The head tax manifestly acted as a significant economic incentive.
[461] A man who grew no coffee and earned no money could not pay his tax. Even if a man could not be bothered harvesting all his coffee, he would certainly harvest enough to pay his tax. Some men who had no coffee took plantation jobs a month or two before the tax was due. I noticed this in two cases at Inonda; most of the Sivepe men had coffee gardens and did not need to work outside. For the first time, tax
[687] defaulters in 1966 were actually jailed for two months. In one village, Kendata, there were as many as 50 defaulters who fought the police and ran into the bush; in Sivepe there were four, all without coffee gardens.

In spite of this tension, people generally supported the ideology
[177] of the council: they wanted the "new age" and they wanted the kind of services that were supplied by the council. At the same time it was never forgotten that behind the tax-gathering councillors stood
623 the government police, armed and ready to make arrests if the councillors were resisted or attached, as sometimes happened. Those who did not pay and tried to escape arrests were judged by the conformists to be ignorant men, unwisely looking for trouble. On the other hand, people deeply sympathised with them. People wanted the "new age," but they did not like the element of compulsion that went with it. They re-elected the councillors who compelled them because they held the Australian authorities, not the councillors, to be directly responsible.